SECRET

[redacted]

17 September 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Investigation of Facts Surrounding the McNamara/McCone Interchange Regarding the Thompson Committee Activities

Mr. Rowen, ASD/ISA, directed Colonel Marshall Sanders of his staff to prepare for Mr. McNamara a chronology of events concerning the activities of the Thompson Committee with special emphasis on those incidents which lead to the McNamara/McCone interchange of 16 September. Specifically, Colonel Sanders is to check the following items:

1. Was there a clearance problem?

2. What was Colonel Sanders' understanding as to the timing, i.e., of the committee's final report?

3. What was his knowledge of the McCone/Rusk conversations and exchange of correspondence regarding the McCone trip to Europe?

4. When did he first learn of the 14 September meeting, and what did he think the purpose of the meeting to be?

5. Why was the meeting held on Monday rather than on the originally scheduled date of Friday?

On the evening of 16 September I assisted Colonel Sanders in preparing a chronology which would answer these questions. The attached memo for Mr. McNaughton was typed in our office on the 17th of September and delivered to Colonel Sanders prior to noon.

PAUL E. WORTHMAN
Colonel, USAF

SECRET

SECRET

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

17 September 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McNAUGHTON

SUBJECT: Significant facts and dates relating to Thompson Committee activity

1. Current activity of the Committee to consider advisability of disclosure of information on our program as a result of recent interviews of Benton and Pearson with Khrushchev began with meeting on 6 June 1964.

2. At a 17 June meeting Committee decided: (a) to surface to members of Congress CIA SECRET paper on Soviet programs, (b) that NAC would be a good source for briefing on Soviet programs giving only minimum information on U.S. programs to forestall questions, and (c) that a white paper should be prepared for contingency use only. (CIA representative Wheelon was cool to any disclosure during first two meetings but was willing to go along with proposal which placed emphasis on Soviet programs.)

3. 7 July meeting saw shift of emphasis away from briefing key members of Congress and toward a NAC briefing, including general nature of U.S. programs, and special treatment of Cuba problem. DOD assumed task of preparing briefing material and white paper.

4. At 15 July meeting DOD draft briefing for NAC was reviewed. Comment by all representatives except CIA.

5. At 22 July meeting CIA tabled a new draft briefing for NAC on U.S. program on grounds that DOD draft, as amended at 15 July meeting, was unacceptable, primarily for security reasons. CIA representative stated DCI would not permit us to reveal information on our own program; Thompson said CIA paper was too thin.

6. During month of August I received several telephone calls from State on dates I cannot remember. Substance of these calls was to inform me, first, that Mr. McCone had talked to Secretary Rusk and Ambassador Thompson on the subject of the NAC briefing and that they had agreed none should be given, but that McCone had offered to brief heads of state during a planned trip to Europe; and, second, some correspondence was going back and forth between Rusk and McCone on the subject, presumably dealing with the question of who would give the briefing and what would be included.

DOWNGRADED AT 12 YEAR INTERVALS;
NOT AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED
DOD DIR. 5200.10

SECRET

7. Early 9 September Ray Garthoff called to report that the Committee would meet Friday, 11 September, to consider revised CIA briefing for NAC and DOD draft white paper, and requested we distribute the latter. Late 9 September I learned from Dr. McMillan's office that the meeting had been postponed until 1600, Monday, 14 September. No indication was given as to urgency of considering these papers to meet an early departure of Mr. McCone; indeed, as I recall, no references were made to a McCone trip during these conversations.

8. I learned of DOD receipt of CIA briefing material at Air Force Association banquet Friday evening, 11 September, and that the material represented a substantial shift from the CIA previous position. It proposed a substantial disclosure of our program. I informed Mr. Rowen of the briefing material availability in Defense on Saturday afternoon. Having no sense of urgency, it was decided to read the DIA briefing Monday morning, 14 September. This was done and Mr. Rowen and I attended the meeting Monday afternoon. At this meeting I learned for the first time of the planned 16 September departure of Mr. McCone. Also, at this meeting, when Mr. Rowen raised the point of JCS review of the briefing, the CIA representative replied that DCI had statutory authority to release the material.

9. Throughout the deliberationsof the Committee from the 6 June meeting, it was always clear to me that no briefing would be given on our program without clearance from the principals of the membership of the Committee. My plan has been to make available for JCS review anything agreed to by the Committee and referred to the principals for approval.

10. On the question of timing of the briefing, Committee discussion went all the way from as soon as possible after the first meeting in June, to sometime in September, to after the election. State was the only agency which pressed for early action, when this seemed to be important.

MARSHALL E. SANDERS
Colonel, USAF

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

With respect to paragraph 6, within several days after the 22 July meeting McCone and Rusk had a conversation in which McCone suggested that he brief heads of state rather than NAC, to which Rusk apparently agreed. McCone followed up with a note to Rusk on 29 July in which he stated "as you have suggested I will be glad to brief heads of state rather than NAC ".

In a letter to McCone on 24 August Rusk reiterated his position on the advisability of briefing NAC some time in September and provided revised version of briefing material agreed to at the 22 July meeting which cut to a minimum information on our program, reduced arms control portion and left portion dealing with Cuba alone.

Over Labor Day weekend McCone called Rusk, offering to give briefing to NAC incorporating material contained in Rusk's 24 August letter.

My conversations with State personnel during August were with Tom Halstead and Leslie Brown, both of INR.